

enduro

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**BACK TO
SCHOOL**
LEARNING THE ART OF
RALLY NAVIGATION

FACTORY FINDS
UNDERSTANDING THAT THE
DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL
RIDE. SLEEP. REPEAT.
ENJOYING A TWO-WHEELED TASTE OF SWEDEN
I SURVIVED...
ISDE FINISHER MEGAN GRIFFITHS TELLS ALL



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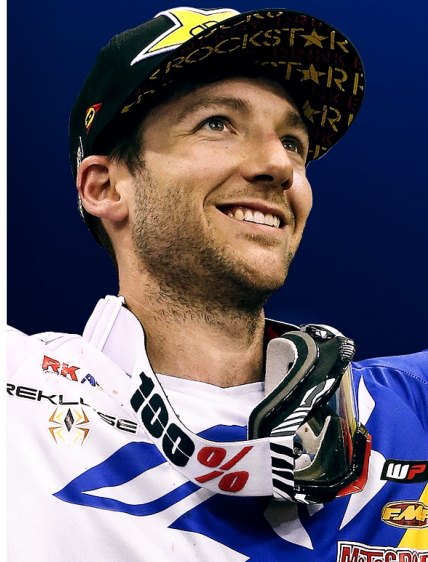


Photos: Future Media

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ISSUE #20

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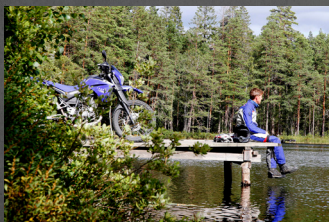
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EDITORIAL #20

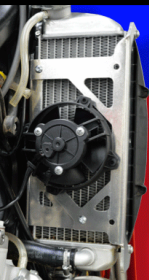
“**W**ith racing you never really arrive. Your goals just change. First you want to win, you know you want to win something. It's always in your head 'I want to win.' It can be a race or a rally, or whatever. You're saying, 'shit man, I want to win this' and it builds and builds inside you. Eventually, for me, it became that I wanted to win the Dakar...” So says KTM Factory Rally racer, Sam Sunderland.

Are you a high-flyer like Sunderland or, like us, a little more modest with what you want to 'take' from your dirt bike passion? Is simply enjoying the ride and wanting to make it to the finish of your next event enough? Wherever your horizon it's still a horizon, more often than not a constantly shifting mirage of a goal you never quite arrive at.

The feeling of doing well, or as well as you expect to, is good. No one's ever headed home from a ride disappointed that they've done well. Taking satisfaction from all the training and bike prep' that's gone into simply getting to the start line, that's important. But when things go well, whether you've achieved your goal or not, it's a feeling that's hard to beat.

Who doesn't also know that feeling of not quite achieving what we know we could have achieved? Ifs and buts don't win races but the fact is we all want to enjoy the ride. A big part of enjoying the ride is doing our best. When you ride well, life's good. There's nothing like that sweet smell of success.

If things don't go to plan, well, there's always next weekend's ride. Unless of course you're a Dakar racer like Sunderland. Then it's a full 12-month wait...



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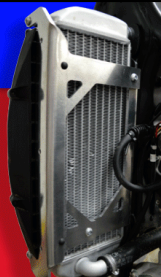


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The Big 6

#6.1 JOSEP GARCIA

In a few years' time, when Josep Garcia is a little better established on the international enduro stage, we'll be able to look back and pinpoint the 2016 ISDE as the young Spaniard's breakthrough event. Sure, he's been fast as a junior in the Enduro World Championship. But in Navarra he was next level fast. No one expected him to battle so close to the top of the overall results like he did. No one expected him to claim outright day wins. Garcia well and truly announced himself as one of Spain's top enduro racers.



The Big 6

#6.2 IVAN CERVANTES

There was no way in hell that Ivan Cervantes was going to miss the ISDE. Announcing his imminent retirement as a 'factory' enduro rider at the final round of the world championship, Ivan was simply out to enjoy the event with friends and team mates. As Spain's most successful ever enduro rider - along with his multiple world titles he topped the ISDE outright in Greece back in 2008 - getting to wear his countries colours in his final enduro outing was a fitting end to an incredible career.









The Big 6

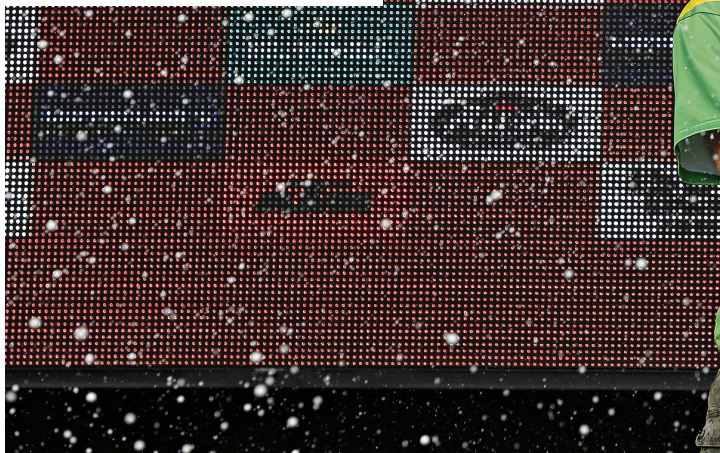
#6.3 TAYLOR ROBERT

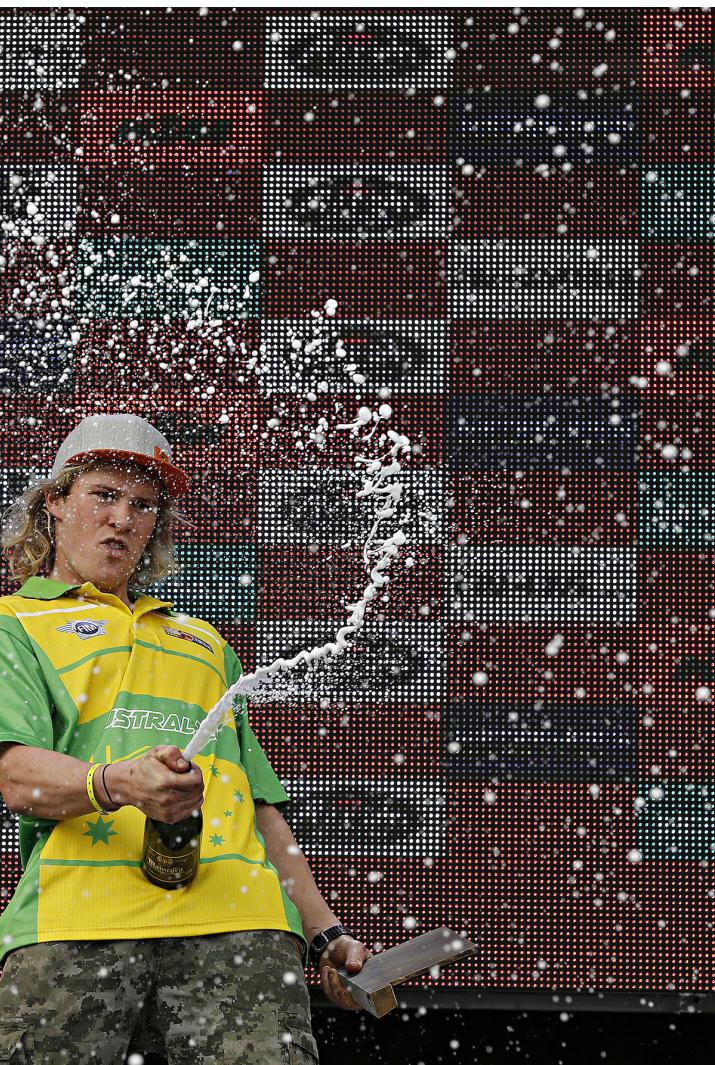
Robert won't forget the 2016 ISDE for quite some time. With the event coming at the end of his first full season of European racing, the USA World Trophy team rider delivered his best performance of the year and then some. Dealing with the dry and dusty opening day as well as he did the rain and mud that arrived mid-week, Taylor kept his cool and not only played a key role in helping Team USA claim their first ever WTT victory, he nailed the outright individual win for good measure.

The Big 6

#6.4 DANIEL SANDERS

Australia had a seriously rough time of things at the Six Days. From the very top of the event in 2015, winning the World Trophy Team competition, they were out in 2016 no sooner had the event started. With Josh Strang picking up an injury and Daniel Milner out with a shattered gearbox sprocket, the Aussies only managed to get half of their Trophy Team to the finish. But amongst the disappointment there was a stand-out performance - Daniels Sanders' Enduro 3 topping result.







The Big 6

#6.5 VINTAGE TROPHY ISDE

Adding a little yesteryear charm to the ISDE the Vintage Trophy category brought together a wildly varied collection of classis enduro machines. The three-day event certainly brought a little 'something extra' to the 91st running of the Six Days, with USA's Fred Hoess taking the overall win on his Husky.







The Big 6

#6.6 ORANGE ON TOP

2016 might not have been a stand-out year for KTM in the Enduro World Championship but at the ISDE Taylor Robert certainly gave the Austrian manufacturer something to shout about. With Ryan Sipes becoming the first American to win the ISDE outright in 2015, Robert's overall victory in 2016 handed KTM a 350-powered Six Days outright win. With 300cc two-stroke KTM mounted Daniel Sanders topping the E3 class and Josep Garcia (on his Husky) winning in Enduro 1 it was certainly a solid week for the Austrian army.

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I SURVIVED...

THE 2016 INTERNATIONAL SIX DAYS ENDURO

Five things that helped Canada's Megan Griffiths reach the finish of the Spanish ISDE

Words and photos: Future7Media

#1 PREPARATION IS KEY

For months and months leading up to the race, I was preparing. I was doing everything I could to make my first ISDE go as smoothly as possible. I spoke to a few riders and support crew who'd done it before trying to soak up as much information as possible. Little pieces of advice like how to change tires as quickly as possible, what tools I should bring, and why Vaseline was going to be so important...

#2 THE CAMARADERIE BETWEEN RACERS

Picture this... We come out of a long single-track section onto a dusty, skidder road. I'm behind Slovakia's Katarina Jurickova and can't see a thing through her dust. She glances back and signals for me to come ride side-by-side with her. Here we are, riding side-by-side, pinned in fifth gear up this windy, dusty, rocky road and all I can think about is how epic it is. I was completely blown away by the amazing help and support I received from racers like Katarina or my teammate Felicia Robichaud. Whether it was helping someone get unstuck, or giving others words of encouragement we were there for each other.

#3 MY BIKE

I rented a 2017 Gas Gas EC 250. I was super nervous about jumping on a bike I'd never ridden before and racing it. I rushed to the Gas Gas tent as soon as I arrived at the paddock. There it sat on it's stand, brand new, never been ridden. I basically became one with this bike during the six days. I felt so comfortable on it almost instantly. The smaller chassis of the Gas Gas really suits me and I can't get enough of that torquey two-stroke motor. This bike held up amazingly well despite quite a few crashes in the muddy conditions during the last few days.

#4 DRIVE AND DETERMINATION

Separating my shoulder and being left unconscious in the first special test after a nasty crash, I was forced to ride for six days in complete agony. There was only one thing I wanted more than to go home and recover, and that was to finish this race. I'm very driven, stubborn, and determined. My determination to cross that finish line kept me going through the pain. Every time my body was telling me to quit, I'd quickly come up with a reason to keep going. I didn't want to let down friends and family. The feeling of accomplishment when it was all said and done was amazing.

#5 SMILE AND LAUGH

This experience was full of pain and struggle, but now that it's all said and done, I mainly have fond memories. I found time in each day to laugh and smile at least once. I remember the few short moments of joy here and there over the hours of struggle and pain during each day from my shoulder injury. It just goes to show how far a little smiling and positivity goes!





MEGAN'S TOP FIVE

MY FONDEST MEMORY

Katarina and I were ripping along a transfer section and came across two people stuck on the hill in about three feet of silt. The funny part was, these people weren't even racers. One guy was on a quad and the other guy was on some sort of dual sport bike! They were taking up the entire trail. I started yelling, and didn't let off on the throttle. We both went around them in one piece and managed to get up this hill amidst the three-foot deep silt ruts, hooting and hollering the whole time!

MY FAVOURITE MOMENT:

At the end of day five we were riding through a small village on our way back to the paddock. There was a group of about six of us. Some of them were doing wheelies down the streets for the spectators. I gave a group of Spanish kids high fives as I rode by and everyone was cheering. We knew we had made it at this point and it felt amazing.

MY FAVOURITE BIKE MOD:

My best bike mod was my Seat Concepts seat cover. It was incredibly grippy and it saved me on days three and four when it got really wet and slippery. It sounds funny but I felt it helped me conserve a tonne of energy.

MY FAVOURITE PIECE OF GEAR

That would have to be my Arai helmet. I had the nastiest crash of my life and I strongly believe that the helmet saved me from some serious damage to my head. I shouldn't have been able to get up and finish this race after the spill I had and I owe it to a very high quality helmet.

WHY DO I WANT TO DO IT AGAIN?

I'd definitely want to race the ISDE again. I'd do it to meet more amazing riders from around the world, to try to improve my results from this year's race, and of course for that amazing sense of accomplishment you get when you cross the finish line. **e**





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Back to School

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE...

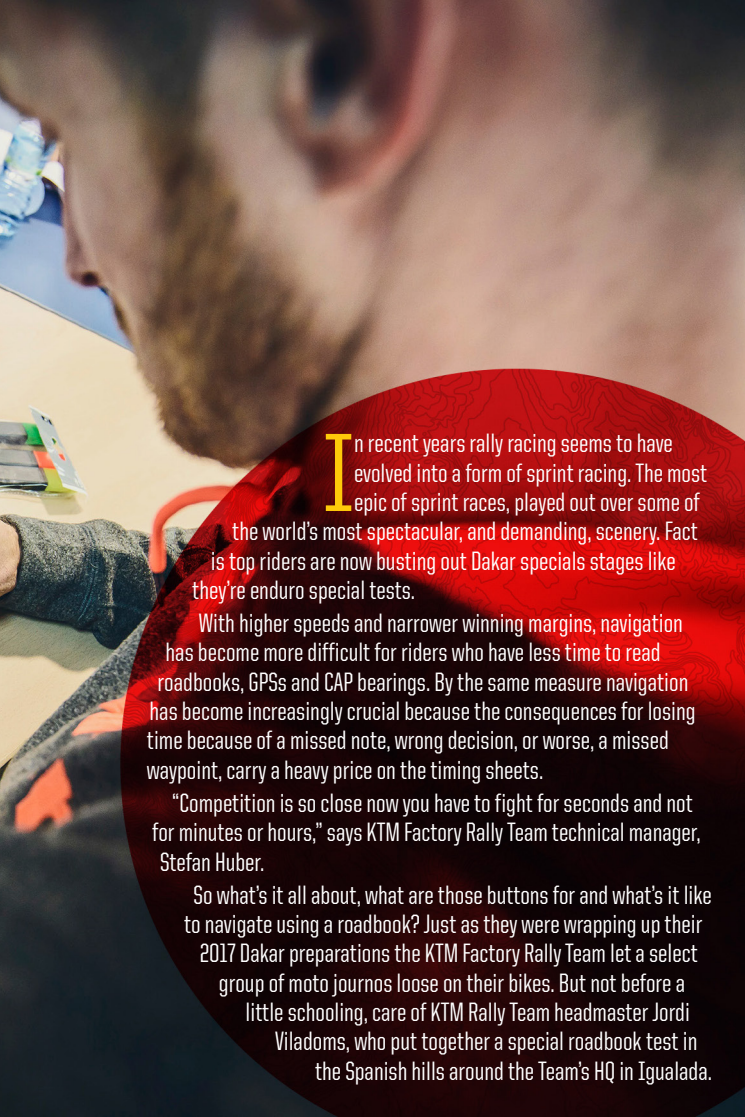
RALLY NAVIGATION

Words: Future7Media / Images: Sebas Romero

The Dakar might be getting faster but the cold, hard reality is you're nothing without solid navigation skills. After all, fast in the wrong direction isn't fast at all. Enduro illustrated headed to KTM's rally team base in Spain to learn a little more about the often-misunderstood art of rally navigation....







In recent years rally racing seems to have evolved into a form of sprint racing. The most epic of sprint races, played out over some of the world's most spectacular, and demanding, scenery. Fact is top riders are now busting out Dakar specials stages like they're enduro special tests.

With higher speeds and narrower winning margins, navigation has become more difficult for riders who have less time to read roadbooks, GPSs and CAP bearings. By the same measure navigation has become increasingly crucial because the consequences for losing time because of a missed note, wrong decision, or worse, a missed waypoint, carry a heavy price on the timing sheets.

"Competition is so close now you have to fight for seconds and not for minutes or hours," says KTM Factory Rally Team technical manager, Stefan Huber.

So what's it all about, what are those buttons for and what's it like to navigate using a roadbook? Just as they were wrapping up their 2017 Dakar preparations the KTM Factory Rally Team let a select group of moto journos loose on their bikes. But not before a little schooling, care of KTM Rally Team headmaster Jordi Viladoms, who put together a special roadbook test in the Spanish hills around the Team's HQ in Igualada.

FAST, NOT FURIOUS

Navigation, in principle, sounds easy. But what's it really like reading so much information when you're trying to ride as fast as you can?

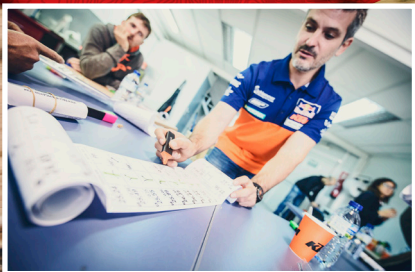
If you had someone sitting on the back of the bike (or beside you like they have in the cars and trucks) bellowing 'turn left here...' or 'sharp right in 200 meters...' things would be easy. But life's not like that on a rally bike.

Actual Dakar roadbooks between what felt like a mass of different directions. Anyway, initially we found it tough. But not as tough as our Austrian journalist friend who managed to get woefully lost at one point.

Truth is we found it a blast. Truly enjoyable. We started slowly, getting our head around taking the roadbook info quickly (Jordi's tip was to look while you brake) and matching that to the trip reading. Getting to grips with it meant understanding what info you needed and when it was important to look closely at the roadbook.

"When I arrive," says Laia Sanz, "my first three days at Dakar was only looking down and it was confusing. But when you get used to it, it's quite easy. Of course sometimes it is difficult with navigation but you learn and take a rhythm to read the book and get faster."

"It's very important how you paint the road book because it helps you a lot to read fast. It means you have your eyes on the riding not the road book," recommended schoolmaster Jordi. His system works in order of importance - the brighter the marker the more important it is.









Understanding the French acronyms, basic drawings and symbols takes a little time but isn't complex. When all that starts to gel and you get at least a basic handle on the process, after maybe twenty minutes or so we found, then it brings a whole new dimension to riding off-road. An exciting dimension at that.

The big part of our learning process was matching the trip (top left screen on the tower) and the trip notes (left side of the roadbook). It's critical you keep on top of that to match where you should be with where you actually are. As Jordi puts it, "your line can be a little different through every corner to the guy making the roadbook so every corner your trip is different to the roadbook.

You have to take this into account and keep adjusting mentally or with the toggle switch to keep them matched."

The simplest issues with that are when you have, for example, a right turn on the notes at 46.7kms. You're 46.7kms might be 0.1km out, but that 0.1km can easily coincide with a different turn, which you take unknowingly, and carry on without realizing the mistake. If you're sharp it soon becomes clear you're wrong but we soon understood how navigation errors can happen.

Not everyone's brain works in the same way so how one person sees the lay of the land may not be the way others see it.

In that way it is a little like learning a new, albeit visual, language. But way more fun.

RIDERS-EYE VIEW

KTM FACTORY RALLY BIKE BELLS AND WHISTLES EXPLAINED

Sitting on a KTM Factory Rally 450 feels pretty 'normal' in almost every way except the obvious ones – big fuel tanks and a whopping great navigational tower right in front of your face. Obviously, navigational equipment is a huge part of rally and therefore a huge part of a rally bike. Mounted on the carbon fibre tower at the headstock, is a tight-knit dashboard of various sized screens that are a rider's means to finding the way, hitting waypoints and the lifeline of communications.

THE TRIP

Crucial for navigation and watched as keenly as the roadbook when navigating. Notes on the roadbook match kilometre markers, in fractions of 10. It's vital the rider calibrates this from the start and regularly through the stage to keep the notes on the roadbook and trip reading in sync. Adjusted via buttons at left thumb.

ROADBOOK HOUSING

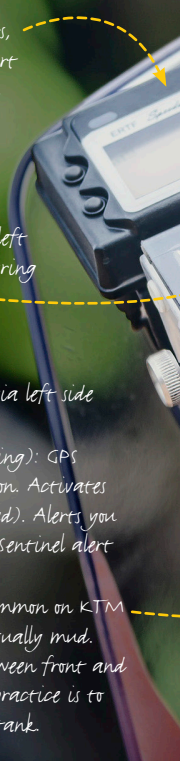
Containing the endless scroll of paper covered in hieroglyphs. It needs constantly turning as you ride via a toggle switch at left thumb. Contains info on exact distance in kilometres, CAP bearing and all-important drawings of visual clues in the landscape.

BACK UP GPS

Can display trip, speed or sometimes CAP also and is adjusted via left side handlebar buttons.

Central larger screen (not shown – handed out at scrutineering): GPS unit handed out by rally organisers with a range of information. Activates (to rider and race organisers) when waypoints are hit (or missed). Alerts you and organisers if you speed through restricted zones and houses sentinel alert system to warn or be warned of other racers (mostly trucks).

Any other business: mapping switch on right handlebar is common on KTM machines. Softer map is used for difficult riding conditions, usually mud. Same spec switch on left side handlebar changes fuel pumps between front and rear so the rider can adjust weight bias as fuel is used. Usual practice is to drain the rear first for 100kms or so before switching to front tank.



READING

GPS positioning displaying your compass bearing as a number. Again, can be crucial in navigation as some roadbook notes and waypoints are CAP reading only, which means the next waypoint has to be found via a direction you travel in for set distance.





RALLY NAVIGATION'S BIGGEST HEADACHES

WAYPOINTS AREN'T REAL

It's not immediately an obvious point to consider but waypoints, the oh-so crucial checkpoints riders must hit during each stage, aren't real. They are just GPS waypoints - invisible markers on the map basically. In reality there is nothing actually there. You're looking for something you can't see. "There's no flag or somebody waving at you in the middle of a desert," says Sunderland. "It's just a point on the GPS you have to get to. A stack of burning tyres would be nice sometimes..."

OFF-PISTE

"When you haven't got a track in open desert you have to follow a CAP heading which, say, might be 250 degrees. So you need to ride at exactly 250 degrees. But when you're going through desert, dunes, trees, bushes, stones and rivers, riding a straight line is impossible, you can't do it."

If the distance to a next waypoint is a few kilometres the rider can stray at 255 or 245 degrees for a bit yet account for it and be more or less 250 and still catch the waypoint radius (which can be 800m, 400m or occasionally as low as 90m).

But if your next waypoint is 10kms away and you're two degrees off you'll arrive where the waypoint should open (it is closed most of the time until you enter its radius), and it's not there. "You've just ridden 10kms in open desert and what do you do?"





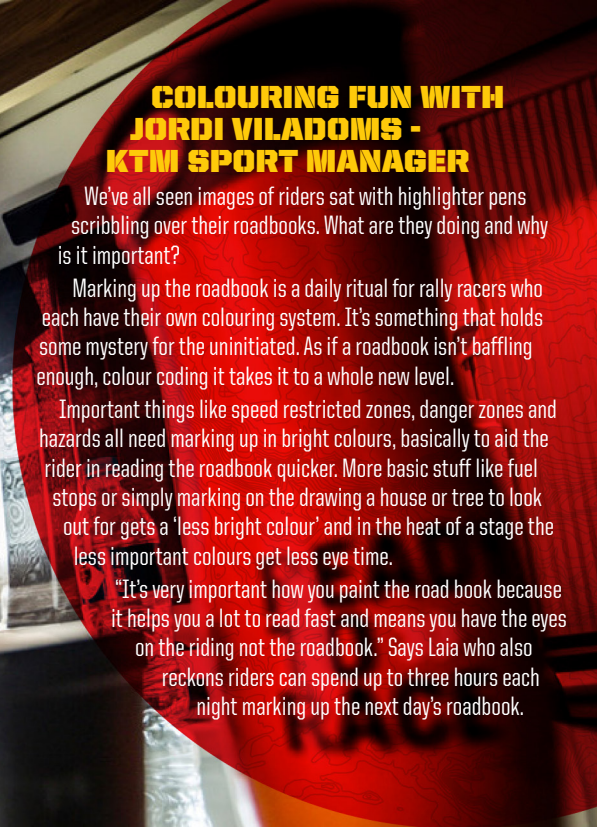
RIVERBEDS

"Riverbeds are hard, maybe hardest because it is difficult to look at the roadbook. If you're on the flat you've got almost all the time you need to look down at the roadbook, not riding over stones makes life easy. But when you're in a riverbed it's full of stones, washes, branches and all sorts of stuff, then it's so hard to take a look at the book because you need to look at what's coming all the time."

INVISIBLE TRACKS

There's also a thing called minus visible, which is when tracks are not really there anymore. There was a track once but now it's overgrown or has disappeared. "They are always tricky because you're never sure where you're going. So sometimes you're riding based on information but you're also going on a bit of a feeling for where you should be," says Sunderland.





COLOURING FUN WITH JORDI VILADOMS - KTM SPORT MANAGER

We've all seen images of riders sat with highlighter pens scribbling over their roadbooks. What are they doing and why is it important?

Marking up the roadbook is a daily ritual for rally racers who each have their own colouring system. It's something that holds some mystery for the uninitiated. As if a roadbook isn't baffling enough, colour coding it takes it to a whole new level.

Important things like speed restricted zones, danger zones and hazards all need marking up in bright colours, basically to aid the rider in reading the roadbook quicker. More basic stuff like fuel stops or simply marking on the drawing a house or tree to look out for gets a 'less bright colour' and in the heat of a stage the less important colours get less eye time.

"It's very important how you paint the road book because it helps you a lot to read fast and means you have the eyes on the riding not the roadbook." Says Laia who also reckons riders can spend up to three hours each night marking up the next day's roadbook.



WHEN NAVIGATION GOES WRONG!

"Some people have more instinct for natural navigation than others but you have to have a good brain. If you race Dakar and can't navigate you don't finish the race." Says super-experienced rally racer and KTM Rally Sport Manager, Jordi Viladoms.

"You have an idea you've been too far one way," says Jordi, "and you can go in the opposite direction and usually find the waypoint opens on the GPS but the further the distance you are going wrong, the further you are from where you should be."

Sanz agrees, "Many times it is better to go back to the last point you know you did find and then go again. Sometimes you don't have a big distance between notes and then it is not difficult to come back. But sometimes you have no notes, you did 20kms and you don't find a waypoint, then it is a big problem because to go back is a long way and a long time."

By all accounts what you do when suffering a navigational 'big problem' is a mixture of guesswork, judgment and luck. Ideally you'll spot another rider and that helps. The CAP reading can help at those times also to get you literally pointing in the right direction, but often there is a lot of riding in what the rider thinks is the right direction in the hope that is correct. Wheel tracks can't always be trusted and often aren't there anyway when you're at the front of the rally.

It's not hard to see how sometimes even the best riders in the world can go badly off course. **e**

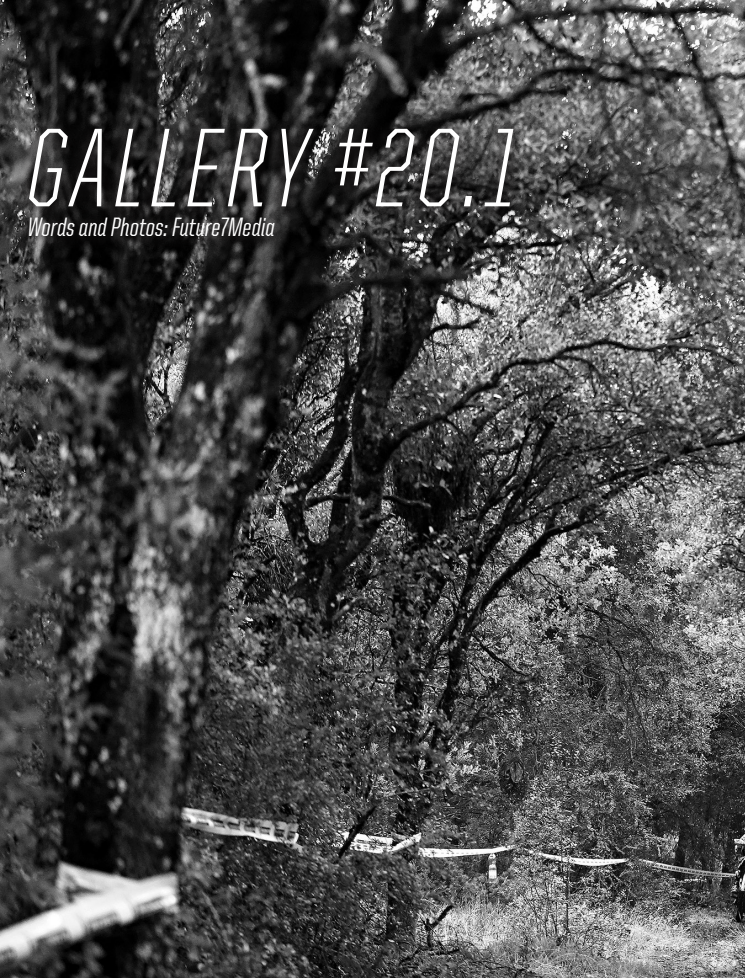
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GALLERY #20.1

Words and Photos: Future7Media





Not all special tests are created equal, and the wooded enduro test used on days three and four was the one that separated the men from the boys. Beneath the thin layer of soil were tens of thousands of slippery, round stones.

As one of the longest tests in the event the difference between a good run and a bad run was significant. Faced with plenty of long, slippery special tests during his participation in the Enduro World Championship Taylor Robert was one of the riders who fared best.

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GALLERY #20.1

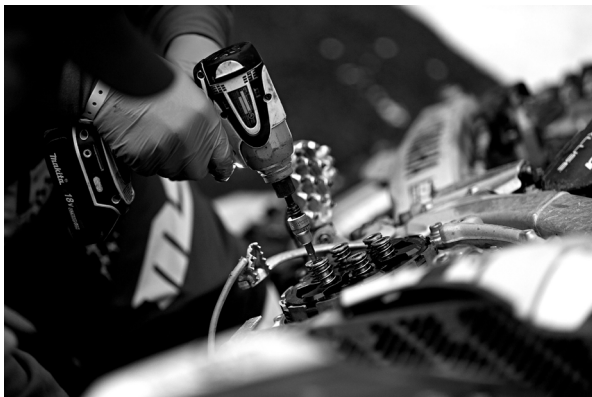


Spanish Rider. Spanish Bike. Spanish World Trophy team. Spanish event.
Jonathan Barragan was as Spanish as anything or anyone at the ISDE.



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Danny McCanney



Michael Persson





GALLERY #20.1



Spectators saluting the special test



GALLERY #20.1



Not since the ISDE in Germany has a little (or as it was then, a lot) of road racing featured as part of the final motocross races. In Spain the on-road racing was refined to just a short blast out of the gate and a few slow-speed corners. Between the road and the dirt was a short section of gravel, designed to slow down road bikes but altogether way more fun on enduro machines.



GALLERY #20.1





GALLERY #20.1



There's no forgetting your first Six Days. After a stand-out rookie season of world championship competition Nathan Watson took to the start of his first ISDE as part of a strong British team. Come the end of the event he'd played his part in a runner-up World Trophy team result. Nathan might not have got the individual result he'd have liked, but it was another impressive ride from the factory KTM newcomer.



Giacomo Redondi was another 'youngster' who enjoyed a stand-out ISDE. Unquestionably the fastest Under 23 rider in the Enduro World Championship during 2016, the Italian carried his form into the ISDE and showed that he now has the speed and maturity to run with just about any rider. Together with Josep Garcia, Giacomo showed that despite their relative inexperience anything's possible when you put your mind to it.



GALLERY #20.1



GALLERY #20.1





In 2015 Kailub Russell failed to finish the ISDE in Slovakia while team-mate and countryman Ryan Sipes went on to claim the overall, outright win. In 2016 Kailub played a key role in helping the USA claim the World Trophy team win while finishing second in Enduro 2 behind team-mate Taylor Robert.

GALLERY #20.1

Pascal Raucheneker



Steward Baylor





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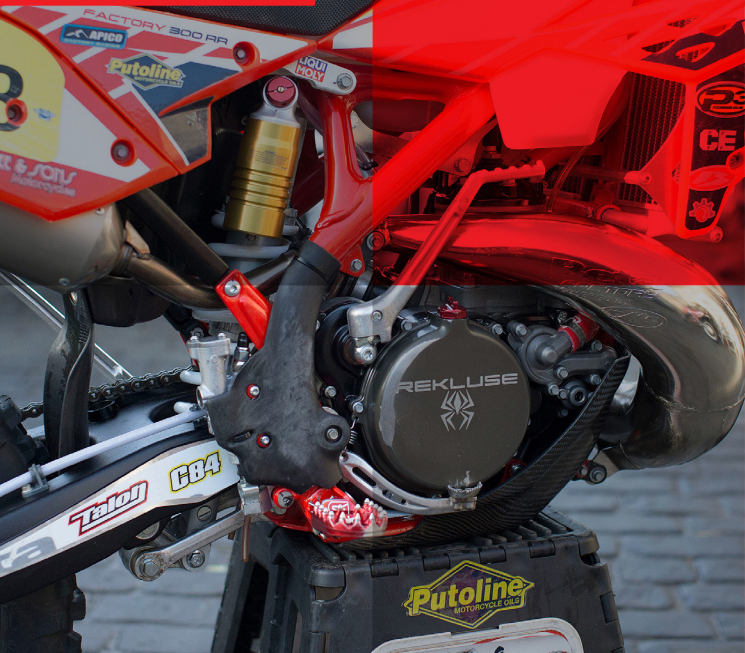
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ASHAN WATSON

BIKE PREP





SURVIVING SIX DAYS

Pro motorcycle mechanic and multiple ISDE finisher Jack Lee runs us around the Beta 300RR he took to the 2016 Six Days in Spain and dishes out bike prep tips good enough to get any bike through a gruelling enduro

Words & Images: Future7Media



BIKE PREP



Freshly jet-washed and sat on a paddock stand, Jack Lee's Beta 300RR looks remarkably well for a bike that's endured close to a week of relentless punishment at the 2016 ISDE. This pretty standard Beta has just had about the toughest of times a bike can have in any single event. But Jack's bike didn't get to the end of the ISDE by luck. Experience, preparation and a constant watchful eye ensured it finished without problems.



Proper preparation prevents piss poor performance, isn't that what they say? It's a philosophy Jack follows daily, working on trials and enduro machines in the workshops of his family-run bike shop. It's a philosophy which carries him well in a tough event like the ISDE. Jack's got a lot of experience as a rider too, Spain 2016 was his third ISDE. We figured he a was a good man to run us through his personal and professional bike prep check-list...



BIKE PREP



1. "The key to making your bike go the distance is keeping on top of things," says Jack as he walks us around his 300RR. "I'm constantly keeping an eye out, looking for things. Any chance I get at time controls, refuelling or the end of the day. It's all about preventative mechanicing. If you're always looking and checking you're seeing things before they become a problem."

The truth is modern bikes should make it through six days of hard work easily. The reality of enduro these days is your less worried about not finishing and more concerned with the 'silly issues' costing you time. So, prep well and cut out the silly issues.

2. Starting with a new bike isn't crucial but it helps as far as engine life is concerned. Run your engine in, of course, but too many hours on the clock is a wrong, right? That said there are plenty of people who ride older bikes, but a new bike or at least a refreshed engine with as few hours as possible on the clock eliminates any doubt.

3. Don't trust the factory build. Pull the bike apart taking everything from engine bolts, suspension linkage, head bearings and everything in-between off for a check and a smear of grease or copper slip. There are two ways to find out for sure if everything is tight - one is to check them, the other is to find out when the engine falls out. Don't take it for granted that they have put enough grease on the linkage (for example) either, run a thin coat of copper slip on engine, frame and linkage bolts to stop them seizing and check the grease on bearings.

4. Keep on top of things. Ride around mindful of everything being right. The factory teams have four or more pairs of eyes looking over bikes at every time check, if it's just you and your eyes then you've got to be sharper to look out for potential problems. "When I'm stopped at a check, I'm looking while I'm eating and drinking. I'm running through a list in my head until I run out of time and have to go again."



BIKE PREP

5. Are those half-worn pads going to make it through the next day? Is that front sprocket looking sad? Is the radiator fluid topped up? Don't start the next day unsure if you're going to make it through. Sort it. "You don't want to go to all the expense and trouble of getting yourself to the ISDE and retire because you didn't want to spend money on a new set of rear brake pads."





6. Know your bike and know your toolbox. It's an old one but it's so, so important at the ISDE to know which tools you actually need to work on your bike so you don't waste time. When time is precious you need to know which size bolt holds the seat on or the rear spindle nut size. Allen keys, T-bars, a particular screwdriver to reach the carb screw or socket and extension to reach the shock top bolt, whatever it is you should know all about it before you leave home.

7. Replicate those key tools you use in condensed form in your tool bag (plus your spare levers, chain link, cable ties and some spare nut and bolts). "When it's really muddy I'll carry a spare front sprocket and pads as well. My mindset is to think what's most important, what's going to stop me from riding - my bike can't ride without fuel, wheels or a chain so they are top of the list. Everything else is less important."

BIKE PREP

8. How often to change oil and filters depends on the event and how hard you are riding the bike. In a dusty event you can be changing air filters every check (Jack did one every other check in Spain). Oil changes depend on how much load you're putting on your bike, but every other day is what Jack goes for. He also runs 100ml more than standard, though he doesn't know why! Tyres and mousses are changed at the end of every day and coolant levels checked in the morning when it's cold.

9. Jack's 300RR is pretty standard mechanically with few bolt-ons. One change is to remove the oil pump and reservoir so the bike runs on pre-mix fuel. No exhaust guard you say? "I've seen them create problems when they are stronger than the pipe. It's quicker and easier to change the pipe if you ding it." Radiator guards are a must as is a stronger sump guard. Jack removes the thermostat too when he fits the stronger coolant hoses: "It's just an extra thing, you don't need it really so I take it out the way. I should have put a front axle puller on to be fair," he adds.





10. A bit of graffiti is no bad thing to help speed things up or remind yourself. Writing "disc" on the correct side of the tyre wall shows in an instant which way around the tyre is going on the rim. "50:1" on the tank right next to the filler cap is an obvious one for you, but what if someone hands the wrong mix at a fuel stop? Jetting sizes written on the side of the carb are a reminder of the base setting Jack started the event with. Bore and stroke numbers on the cylinder are there in case the organisers need it for noise tests. Small details = time saved in the event.

BIKE PREP

JACK'S MENTAL CHECK LIST

To do list every time you stop, in order of importance.

If you've two or ten minutes start at the top and work through:

Eat and drink

Fuel

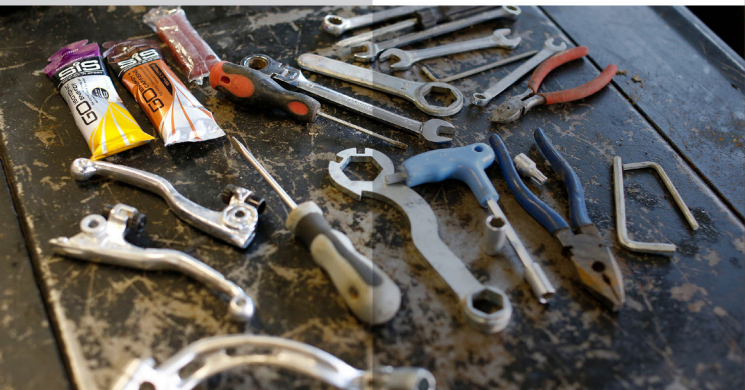
Wheels and spokes

Chain tension

Air out of forks

Air filter

Nut and bolt check around the bike with an 8mm T-bar **E**



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TRAIL RIDE SWEDEN

Fancy the idea of riding endless tracks and trails through untouched forestry in a country with a tremendous history of off-road sport? Magic Motor Experience invited Enduro illustrated for a two-wheeled taste of Sweden

Words: Future7media, Images: Motoplus and JP





A-list Swedish facts: ABBA, Husqvarna, Husaberg, Hakan Carlqvist (and that beer), Ikea, Anders Eriksson and, err, Smörgåsbord? There are moose everywhere (only they don't call them moose, they're elk in Sweden) and it gets cold in winter. Those are our Swedish facts.

But what about riding there. Of course, you can race there - there's a healthy enduro scene and some of Europe's longest running (and bonkers) races take place there - but what if you just want to ride off-road and enjoy some Swedish woods riding away from competition?

Sweden has to be on most people's list of places to go riding in this world of ours, not least because of the huge off-road history the country has. Sweden is a vast country with relatively few people living there - most of the 9.9million population live in cities, which leaves plenty of empty space in Sweden's 450,250sq kilometres of land (by comparison Britain has 61million people shoe-horned into 209,331sq kms). You do the math.

That slightly unbelievable fact was floating around our brains when we arrived in Denmark ahead of three days riding. Denmark? Yes, Copenhagen is the closest airport to the Magic Motor Experience base on Bolmsö Island, Smeland, Sweden.

Magic Motor Experience is a one-man band off-road tour company, guiding small groups along an endless network of trails spider-webbing their way through the classic





“...get up, ride off-road all day, stay in a nice hotel, eat nice food, sleep, get up, repeat. It's the right mix of a good day's riding without being too late for a shower and a beer.”

Southern Swedish countryside. It was Mats Jonsson who invited us to get stuck in to, taking a step away from enduro and settling into a steadier ride for a change on a trail bike for a few days.

The Magic tour format is a simple one – get up, ride off-road all day, stay in a nice hotel, eat nice food, sleep, get up, repeat. It's the right mix of a good day's riding without being too late for a shower and a beer.

If you arrive in rural Sweden not sure quite what the terrain will be like then Smeland, in the central southern third of the country, has relatively rolling countryside with vast areas of forest, meadows and lakes. There's few better introductions to Sweden. Generally, the landscape we were riding in was littered with farms, country folk living in the same red oxide coloured buildings they have for hundreds of years.



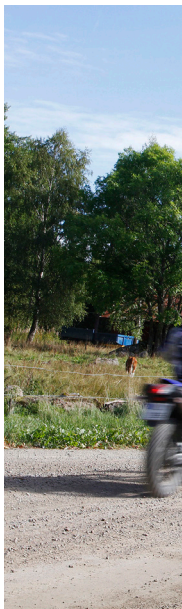
Our trip set off from Magic Motor Experience owner Mats' house in Smeland - his family farm in fact that houses the handful of Yamaha XT660Rs we spent four days riding. No, it's not an enduro bike but this isn't an enduro.

Mats admits his passion is to do the trips off-road and not just take people on tours of his country. He likes to get folk seeing real, rural Sweden, the way he's been doing all his life on the dirt roads and trails. In rural Sweden there's a much higher percentage of dirt roads because they're cheaper to maintain and have very little traffic.

The riding itself is as it is easy to enjoy the ride through what feels like off-piste territory.

We covered hundreds of kilometres on these 'roads' which are in good condition and largely empty of traffic (and outside the summer season very low levels of humans altogether). That makes much of the riding, even when you're away from the woods, interesting though never too challenging. It's not hard to suss out why Sweden has a history of decent rally drivers either, road conditions that would see many other countries in total traffic chaos is normal in Sweden. The gravel surface builds up where four wheel vehicles (mostly Volvos) push it to the side, like an endless speedway track. It makes drifting slides like you're a flat track star all part of the entertainment.

You can ride like that and, sure, it gets a bit addictive, but you can also knock it back a bit and take in the rural scenery. It's kinda unique and the terrain never gets technical enough that you can't take a look at what you're riding past and through. The odd abandoned building, isolated farms, quaint villages and ancient rusting farm machinery litter the way.





“By all accounts we were pretty lucky with the weather while we visited. It was warm, sunny and frankly perfect for riding. It’s not always like that in Sweden...”

By all accounts we were pretty lucky with the weather while we visited. It was warm, sunny and frankly perfect for riding. It's not always like that in Sweden and the guides were laughing just a bit too much about how much it had rained the week previous. We're no strangers to riding bikes in the rain and the idea of doing that, and calling it a holiday, sounded like sadism not humour!

Accommodation is great though so a hot shower is guaranteed at the end of the day. We stayed in different hotels each night, all of which were a good standard. Around these parts of Sweden the options are to go for 3 or 4 star hotels or drop down to farms and B&Bs, which can't really cater for groups. According to Mats they're not really up to the job. So, the good hotels are the best option and it made for a bit of luxury in this all-inclusive trip. A night in a lakeside hotel near Eksjö, then Kosta before another night near another perfect lake, this time near Almhult were each peaceful and with good food. Though don't forget to re-mortgage your house if you fancy a couple of beers.

Almhult is famous as the birthplace of the global furniture phenomenon that is IKEA. There's a museum as it happens but we weren't fussed about seeing it and favoured more kilometres on the bikes over a walk around a museum. The option's there though, at various points of the trip, to take your helmet off and spend a bit of time soaking local history.

Depending on where you live you may or may not be used to having a quiet night's sleep but two of the three nights of this trip were next level quiet. They truly were those kinds of places where you see a million stars out your window and hear nothing but the sound of an owl hooting. Or elk.

Speaking of elk, Mats was pretty good at building the elk-hype up to a frenzy. You'd be excused for expecting to see one around every corner if you believed him. They're huge, have antlers, big noses and look pretty daft so why wouldn't you get excited about seeing one? We did. Maybe it was just us but when the baffling small piles of poo we'd been constantly riding over turned out to be actual elk poo, the odds were high. Or so we thought.







“The riding itself is a mixture of trails through the woods and those largely dirt (not asphalt) roads... hardly ridden, grassy tracks through the woods and along forest fire roads.”



Did we see one? Like hell we did. We did see a lot of poo though.

There would be no point telling you this trip is enduro heaven, it's a trail bike dream if you're into that sort of thing. The tours don't have any intention to be a Swedish enduro. The riding and the place in general is way too relaxed for that. It's not that we were bumbling along like old ladies, we covered well over 100 twisting and varied kilometres each day. An enduro bike wouldn't work here, you'd get bored and the tracks aren't really that technical. This is trail riding make no mistake.

If we're honest the trip we went on was probably good for three days and not four. Fascinating and idyllic though it was we'd seen enough of the miles and miles of rural landscape, oxide red farms, mushroom and elk poo by the end of day three.

What kept enthusiasm of Sweden with some nice hotels.

One thing to bear in mind motor tours are more relaxed than that, aimed as much at showing you Smeland in all its rural glory as riding through the trees on dirt.

SWEDEN BIKE TRAVEL TIPS

Make sure you take some warm and waterproof clothes because the weather can change and is often wet. Make sure you take plenty of deep breaths of the freshest air you'll breathe, too.

Tools and refreshment, including lunch, is on the support vehicle, which is often not that far away but we took a hydropack and found it handy.

Make sure you take plenty of money for a beer, wine or spirits - it's the only thing other than the air ticket not included in the price. The hotels we stayed in were well stocked with drinks (and the food was great) but heavy taxes means alcohol costs an arm and a leg.

Definitely look out for elk. If you see one send us a picture would you?



YAMAHA XT660R

Yamaha's XT should need little introduction but this reliable, economical and relatively capable bike is comfortable whether you're riding standing or sitting for long hours. Which makes it a good choice for this trip and to be truthful we had no complaints so long as you don't expect too much.

Sure, you could do it on an Adventure bike or even an enduro bike but it could easily be less fun on either. Honestly, we think you'd get fed up with the lack of action or numb in the bum on an enduro bike. An Adventure bike wouldn't be as confident on the dirt and heavier.

MAGIC MOTOR EXPERIENCE

Magic Motor Experience is a one-man band off-road tours company taking small groups through deepest Sweden along the endless network of countryside trails. Tours begin from the owner's farm in Bolso Island, Smeland and depending on which trip you book, fan out in different directions. The format is a simple one: get up ride off-road all day, stay in a nice hotel, eat nice food, sleep, get up, repeat. Options are four, seven and ten days riding with different routes for each.

Prices are all inclusive, for details and dates see www.magicmotorexperience.com 



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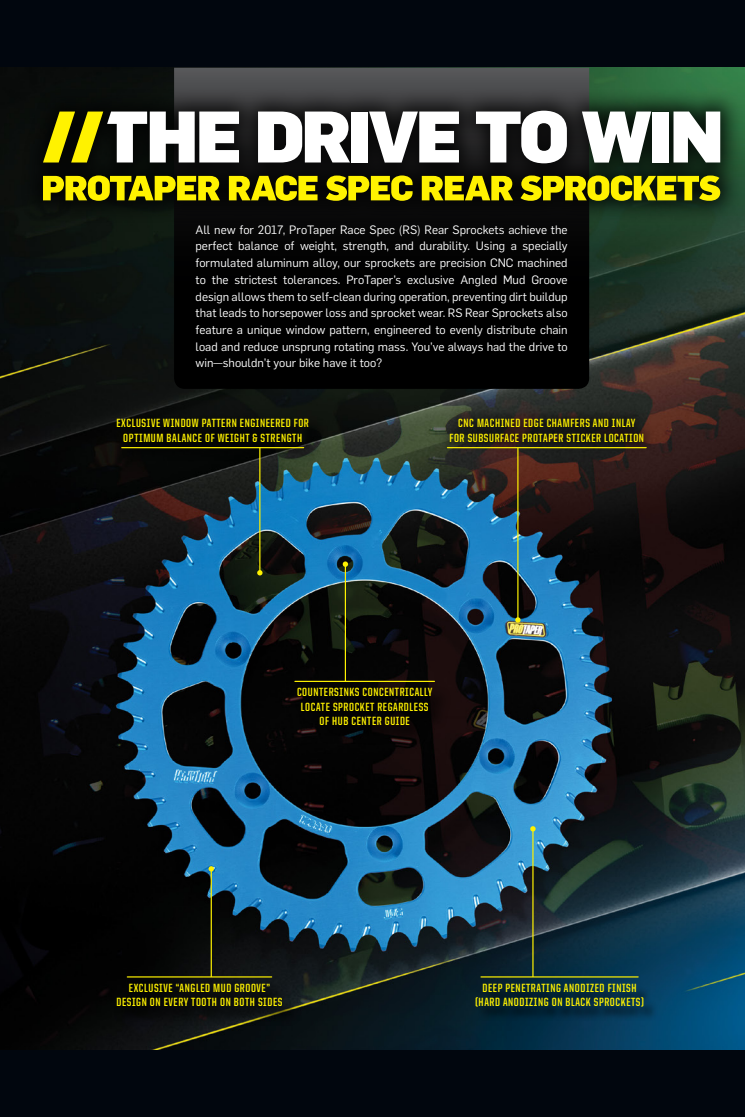
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Josh Gotts / GB



Parc fermé



Jack Edmondson / GB







Australian Women's Team

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Josep Garcia / Spain





Norway

GALLERY #20.2



Maria Franke / Germany

GALLERY #20.2





GALLERY #20.2



Daniel Sanders / Australia



GALLERY #20.2

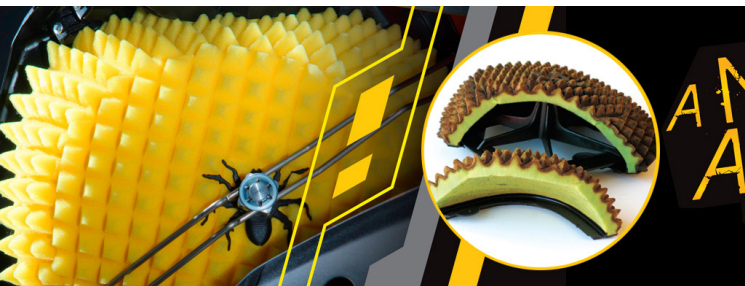






Jamie McCanney / GB

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10

NOTABLE FINDS...

WHAT WE LEARNED... KTM AND HUSQVARNA FACTORY ENDURO BIKES

Aside from the precision feel of factory enduro bikes - the sharpness with which these sophisticated woods weapons go about their duty - it's often the tiny differences in set-up we notice most. It's the little things that often have the biggest impact...

Words: Future7Media / Images: Seabas Romero, Future7Media, Marco Campelli

SUSPENSION

The WP Cone Valve forks and Trax shock fitted across the board to both KTM and Husqvarna's factory bikes are the customer items you can buy. If you've got the money. That's not to say they aren't special though. Standard WP equipment is good but the Cone Valve and Trax units are upgrades good enough for factory racers.

Across the board the rebound, especially from the shock, is peachy as hell. Such nice control off the stroke it feels like you know exactly where the wheels are and what they are doing across bumps, roots and fallen trees. Forks feel like they Hoover up rocks and roots, too.

If you want to be thrown into the trees then Taylor Robert's shock set-up should see you right! The stiffer forks and quick rebounding shock was a heady combination. Most run the larger diameter 52mm forks.

MX VERSUS ENDURO

The heady mix of MX and enduro engine and chassis parts gets confusing across the different models and riders on both factory KTM and Husqvarna race bikes. Pascal Rauchenecker runs MX geometry linkage on his bike, where most others run the standard enduro set-up. It's a symptom of the difference in the backgrounds of different riders.

Danny McCanney's approach to bike set-up is to have it softer, much more like standard, for improved feel. Flywheels are a similar story, some prefer the standard feel, others the faster-revving response of the MX flywheel. Nathan Watson has the MX ignition on his 250F.

BAR DROP

Depending on how tall you are and how much standing you do the position of handlebars can be a quite a contrast. Taylor Robert's bars drop a fair way back, though not as far back as Nathan Watson's who must flap off the back of his bike like a flag, or at least sit down a lot. It's amazing to us that someone so tall can ride with their bars that far back.





**"RAUCHENECKER
RUNS MX GEOMETRY
LINKAGE ON HIS BIKE,
WHERE MOST OTHERS
RUN THE STANDARD
ENDURO SET-UP..."**





HAPPY FEET

The common thread across the two teams and riders is to have footpegs 5mm lower and 5mm further back. Raptor titanium pegs are favorite. We noticed one thing about gear lever position - partly because our tester fell out the trials tree - Laia Sanz' gear lever position is higher than her teammates. Or maybe she just has bigger feet.

"...THE MX GEARBOX MAKES FIRST A LITTLE TALLER AND BRINGS ALL GEARS CLOSER TOGETHER, WHAT WAS LOST IN THE SLOWER SPEED STUFF WAS GAINED IN THE HILLS."

BRAKES AND CALIPERS

Solid, undrilled rear discs are less aggressive on Taylor's bike but not all riders go for it - it depends how hard the rider is on the rear brake. Brembo factory parts on the KTM have different diameter (internally) front master cylinders. The more aggressive 10mm part is most common and feels fantastic when matched with the Brembo caliper. Some opt for more feel, from the 9mm part but the factory Husky of McCanney's bike has a completely standard brake system because he prefers a softer feel.

Rear master cylinder on the KTM has no site glass "because once it got broken, the rider had no rear brake and from then on we always make the rear brake without the sight glass." Says Farioli Team technician, "Ceco" Vardanega.

FIVE OR SIX?

That is the gearbox question. Many of the factory bikes from both Husqvarna and KTM factory enduro teams have five-speed boxes, borrowed from their motocross siblings. In reality it makes little difference whether they have five or six, that sixth gear is really only there to use on the road. But the MX gearbox makes first a little taller and brings all gears closer together, what we felt was lost (a little) in the slower speed stuff is gained in the hills with closer ratios.



PANKL POWER

Pankl have a long-standing relationship and supply engine parts for many Mattighofen-built race bikes and are proven for strength and reliability as well as improved performance. Enduro crankcases across all bikes house Pankl cranks, pistons and conrods. Cams are built in-house. Hinson clutches are a common part on all factory bikes, too. Simply they're stronger and better suited to GP level competition where things get worked harder.

ENGINE MAPPING

There's a different CDI with tweaked mapping to suit the factory cam profile. Cam profiles aren't MX on the whole, somewhere between MX and Enduro are the factory-spec changes to Taylor Roberts' engine. Some are hybrid but all follow a smooth profile to make the bike tractable and useful across technical terrain.

One big tweak more prominent on the KTM four-strokes is the engine braking effect into corners. Tweaked mapping makes them more like a two-stroke when the throttle is closed, with less aggressive engine braking during transition into a corner.

"TWEAKED MAPPING [ON THE KTM FOUR-STROKES] MAKES THEM MORE LIKE A TWO-STROKE WHEN THE THROTTLE IS CLOSED, WITH LESS AGGRESSIVE ENGINE BRAKING DURING TRANSITION INTO THE CORNER"

STAND-OUT TYRE

The front Michelin Enduro Competition VI fitted to Danny McCanney's Husqvarna shone a light on just how much of a hold the Michelin has not just on the dirt but on the tyre market. Michelin has a range of tyres for different conditions and temperatures and for this more or less back-to-back test (admittedly in different locations) the Competition VI stood out as our preferred tyre for feedback, feel and confidence.







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FIERCE 450?

The throttle body is the standard enduro part on the factory KTMs, they say, but Husqvarna run the MX part on some bikes, notably Bellino's 450. It'll take you to the moon and back if you twist a little too eagerly. But treat his 450FE with care and accurate throttle movements and it responds accordingly. The precise throttle response means you know where you are with a very linear and tractable power delivery that reacts any time you ask it to. The suspension is softer and more progressive than you'd believe if you watch Mathias in a special test. **E**





HUSQVARNA TX125 TEST BIKE

EIGHTH LITRE EXPRESS

A strong and dramatic installment on our long term Husqvarna TX125. New parts, some suspension twiddling, power valve spring experimentation, rock-hopping and the ultimate sob story...

Words & Photos: Future7Media







Living the simple life means getting out and riding bikes for the hell of it, right? Well, we've been ticking that box good and proper of late on our Husqvarna TX125 test bike. Pretty much as often as we can before the cold and wet weather sets in here in the Northern hemisphere.

Lost days chasing MX riders around local sand tracks, tough days rock-hopping in quarries, thoughtful days testing suspension and power valve springs. And of course hours in the workshop fettling our trusty steed. Oh, and one ill thought-out, ill-fated time card enduro outing.

QUARRY MAN

Treating the TX to some rock action was on the cards ever since we got the bike. At 92kg it should mean the little Husky is notably easier ride when the going gets technical. So we simply headed for a quarry to find out.

What we found is that the TX is sweet through long, rocky sections, particularly where the rocks are big. It's easier to float through rather than bumping into things. It does require a little more focused technique than on a 'bike bike' with more power - with less low down throttle response it simply means you can't use the torque to keep putting the front wheel where you want it. The TX needs a smooth clutch finger, a constant flow of power from somewhere between low to mid-range and a little trials technique - standing on the pegs, using your legs - to best get through rocks.

Technical hills and loose climbs covered in rocks, with the odd rock step for good measure, is a similar story. Attack a hill with a load of revs and the bike remains light and alert. But definitely the lack of low down grunt is noticeable when the rocks start getting in the way. Keeping the motor lively is certainly important - there's just not the luxury of being able to use less throttle to feel for grip. When you're trying to keep the front wheel skimming over rocks up a hill the peaky feel of the 125cc engine is harder work than a bigger capacity bike, despite being lighter. It's a kind of win/lose situation.

What we think it proves is that you've got to be a better rider than you think to ride a 125 two-stroke. You sure as hell can't be lazy. Ultimately, it's interesting to note that a different riding technique - a more active riding technique - is needed to get the best from the 125.

OILED PLUGS

Hanging out in quarry all day was all about low-speed riding with very little fast, full-throttle blow-outs. That meant the TX got pretty oiled up, dribbling oil out the silencer with the plug looking like it'd been out for a week's work on an oil rig. The funny thing is carburation has been absolutely on-song the whole time we've had the bike, until that day in the quarry.

This is the nature of two-strokes though isn't it and while the TX ran perfectly in the warmer months, the jetting needs a bit of attention now it's gotten colder. With so much riding of four-strokes in recent years it highlighted the fact of how important it is to set a carburetor right. The book recommends a slightly bigger main jet for cooler weather, which we've slotted in with good effect. To perfect slower speed carburation we're likely going to need to delve a little deeper, possibly looking at needle and needle position.

SUSSING OUT SUSPENSION

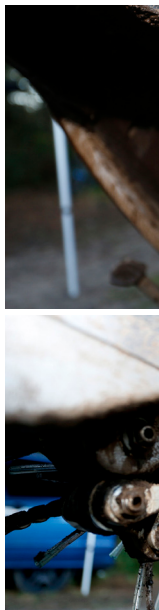
We pitched up at Dr Shox Suspension test compound for some expert opinion on the TX's WP set-up. Dr Shox, aka Chris 'Kiwi' Hockey has a fantastic test compound with a mix of enduro, MX and extreme, all of which are bloody hard work to ride but perfect for bike testing.

Setting the TX up with Kiwi was actually pretty short and sweet. He had a ride and also watched me ride and reckoned the forks were just about fine for the way I ride and my weight. I've mentioned it before here but manufacturers' 'sport' settings usually suit me just fine with my weight so that's where they sit. I hadn't got the preload adjusters on '0', so Kiwi recommended clicking it round fully but otherwise all was good.

The shock was the same, set to 'sport' by the book except I've added a touch more low-speed damping (12 clicks, not 13). Sag is set as standard (35mm static) that means it behaves itself well across the MX tracks and fast whooped-out woods.

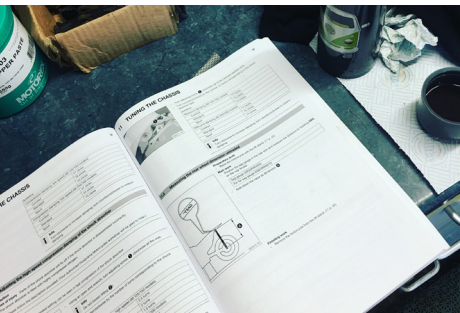
After riding the factory KTM and Husqvarna 300s of Walker and Jarvis last month though we're going to reduce that sag and soften things off ahead of some planned extreme enduro riding.

**"WHILE THE
PERFECT
WARMER
JETTING N
OF ATTEN
GOTTEN C**



**THE TX RAN
LY IN THE
MONTHS, THE
NEEDS A BIT
TION NOW IT'S
COLDER..."**





**"THE TX WAS PRIMED
AS WE CHECKED IN
FOR SCRUTINEERING
EARLY DOORS"**



SPRING TIME

Down the right-hand-side of the TX125's engine is a small cover hiding the power valve, the nub of a two-stroke engine and about as simple a bit of engine tuning as you'll ever find. Swapping an inch-long spring under that cover is an easy job but one that affects how the engine behaves.

Commonly you find green, yellow, blue, red and colourless springs, side-by-side you can see how tight the coils are - the tighter they are the stiffer the spring, with green generally tighter and red softer. A stiffer spring holds the power valve down longer making it open later (so peak power arrives later) and power delivery is softer. A soft spring does the opposite, letting the valve open quicker and power arrive more aggressively.

The TX comes with a yellow spring installed, with a softer blue and stiffer green spare. I tried the blue at an MX practice track and it creates more hit off the bottom, faster revving and more aggressive. The green spring takes the hit out of the engine, giving it a more mellow character, better for trails and trials-type riding.

I asked the Internet and was advised to 'FIT THE RED ONE YOU PUSSY!' (actual response). On the TX with its little motor, softening it right off makes it pretty docile at the bottom end already but equally I for one don't need a peaky rocket most of the time.

As ever it depends what, how and where you ride but I found the yellow spring was better overall, the one it came fitted with. There's a moral here somewhere about leaving things alone but I will try the green during an upcoming extreme enduro.



"WHY'D YOU RUN TUBES U TIT!"

If you live in the top half of the world, November means winding down and the end of another season. The annual Muntjac Enduro is late in the British enduro calendar and ends the show more or less in the UK. We entered the TX but things didn't go quite to plan though...

Bike prepped included new, harder compound grips from the Husqvarna parts catalogue, new Metzeler Six Days enduro tyres, a cut and paste job on the backing and snazzy numbers to fit, a sweet new air filter from FunnelWeb and an AXP sump guard and rad braces. The TX was primed as we checked in for scrutineering early doors.



My plan was to set a moderate pace, which I could maintain until the end of the day. I was under no illusion it was going to be hard work after heavy overnight rain. Six minutes of fast riding later and my first special was complete – boy was it slippery.

The plan of following a steady pace for the main lap was going ok until I got one, then two punctures. I reckon with about five miles clocked up my rear tyre went flat, a couple of miles later the front did the same. WTF? I'd hit nothing.

Now, I know what you're thinking, 'schoolboy error fitting tubes instead of mousses to race'. I know. I know. I know. I heard it all and got plenty in the neck about it from mates (hence the "why'd you run tubes u tit!" message from one mate) but hear me out.

I've spent thousands of hours of my life riding in woods, I'm familiar with them and the concept of punctures. In all that time I cannot remember when I ever punctured in this type of sandy/loamy pine forest. You'd give a guy a bit of slack for not expecting a flat at this event if that was the case wouldn't you? No? My mates feel the same.





In hindsight, yes, mousses would have been a good idea. The Enduro21 Instagram massive reckoned on Tubliss, so we'll give them a test sometime soon. But, but, but I got my entry late, mousses are expensive, I didn't have any in the garage that weren't super soft (for Extreme enduro) and the dog ate my homework. No-one is more sorry than me, ok?

Somehow I arrived back at the paddock just about the time I should have been leaving again, with tyres falling off rims. Cue some frantic running back and forwards to the van with wheels (I know they should have been in the tech area, but I told you I wasn't expecting punctures). This took ages, of course, and when I finally got back to my bike the rear was flat again - this time the rim tape had been savaged by the lap with flat tyres and had punctured the replacement rear tube. At which point I must admit I threw the towel in, swore a lot, declared it amateur hour, loaded the van and drove home in a huff. What a tit indeed.

Thanks to: *Chris Hockey for set-up and training. Check his Boot Camps and suspension services at www.drshox.co.uk* **E**

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ON THE COVER: We can't remember ever having
as much fun on a dirt bike as we did during
KTN's factory rally bike test and navigation
event. If we ever win the lottery we know
exactly what we're buying!

EVENT: KTM rally navigation media event, Spain
PHOTO: Sebas Romero



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